

REMARKS

Claims 2-4 and 6-14 are pending in this application. Claim 5 is currently withdrawn from consideration. By this Amendment, Applicants cancel claim 1 without prejudice or disclaimer, amend claims 2 and 9 into independent form to incorporate the limitations of canceled claim 1, and amend claims 6-8, 10 and 11. Applicants also add new claims 13 and 14. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

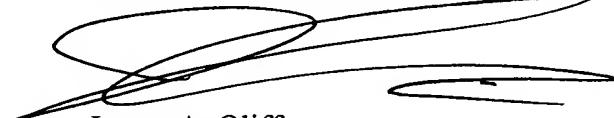
The Office Action rejects claims 1, 6-8, 10, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kasiraj et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,493,183), and rejects claims 1, 6-8, and 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meyer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,991,113). Applicants gratefully acknowledge that the Office Action indicates that claims 2-4 and 9 contain allowable subject matter. As noted above, Applicants amend claims 2 and 9 into independent form to recite allowable subject matter. Independent claims 10 and 11, although of different scope, recite features similar to those of claim 2 that define patentable subject matter. Therefore, Applicants submit that independent claims 10 and 11 are also allowable over cited references. Moreover, new claims 13 and 14, although of different scope, recite features similar to those of claim 9 that define patentable subject matter. Therefore, Applicants submit that independent claims 13 and 14 are also allowable over cited references. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 2, 9-11, 13, and 14 contain allowable subject matter.

Claims 3, 4, and 6-8 depend from allowable claim 2, and therefore, also define patentable subject matter, as well as for the additional features they recite. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims contain allowable subject matter, and respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejections of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 2-4 and 6-14 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Amendment Transmittal

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